

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to school readiness programs;
3 implementing s. 1(b) and (c), Art. IX of the
4 State Constitution; creating the voluntary
5 universal prekindergarten education program;
6 limiting the application of provisions relating
7 to school readiness programs; requiring the
8 State Board of Education to submit a report
9 with recommendations or options for the
10 curriculum, design, and standards of the
11 voluntary universal prekindergarten education
12 program; directing the Office of Program Policy
13 Analysis and Government Accountability and the
14 Auditor General to conduct audits and submit
15 reports to the Governor and Legislature;
16 providing an effective date.

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18 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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20 Section 1. Voluntary universal prekindergarten
21 education program.--

22 (1) The voluntary universal prekindergarten education
23 program shall provide a high-quality prekindergarten learning
24 opportunity in the form of early childhood development and
25 education which is voluntary and free for every child in this
26 state who is 4 years of age. The program must be organized,
27 designed, and delivered in accordance with section 1(b) and
28 (c), Article IX of the State Constitution. Except as otherwise
29 expressly provided by law, sections 411.01-411.011, Florida
30 Statutes, do not apply to the voluntary universal
31 prekindergarten education program.

1 (2) The State Board of Education shall conduct a study
2 on the curriculum, design, and standards for the voluntary
3 universal prekindergarten education program. By October 1,
4 2003, the State Board of Education shall submit a report to
5 the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of
6 the House of Representatives. The Agency for Workforce
7 Innovation and the Florida Partnership for School Readiness
8 shall provide any necessary information and coordinate with
9 the state board. The report must include the recommendations
10 or options of the state board on each of the following program
11 elements:

12 (a) Curriculum and standards.--Developmentally
13 appropriate curriculum and standards that provide children a
14 high-quality prekindergarten learning opportunity. These
15 curriculum and standards must be designed to:

16 1. Address and enhance each child's ability to make
17 age-appropriate progress;

18 2. Provide early childhood development of language and
19 cognitive capabilities;

20 3. Provide education in basic skills and other
21 appropriate skills; and

22 4. Deliver early childhood development and education
23 according to professionally accepted standards.

24 (b) High-quality learning opportunity.--Quality
25 standards that provide children a high-quality prekindergarten
26 learning opportunity. These quality standards must include
27 specific recommendations or options for the expected outcomes
28 of the voluntary universal prekindergarten education program.

29 (c) Quantity of instruction.--Standards for the
30 quantity of instruction to be provided as voluntary and free
31 for every child in the state who is 4 years of age. These

1 standards must include specific recommendations or options for
2 each of the following elements:
3 1. Hours per day; and
4 2. Days per year.
5 (d) Delivery system.--Standards for providers in order
6 to deliver children a high-quality prekindergarten learning
7 opportunity. These standards must include specific
8 recommendations or options for each of the following elements:
9 1. Appropriate range of settings, including both
10 public and private providers, with consideration of the
11 capacity in each available setting;
12 2. Licensing or regulatory requirements for providers;
13 3. Health and safety requirements for providers; and
14 4. Parental choice.
15 (e) Assessment and evaluation.--Methods for measuring
16 the performance of the voluntary universal prekindergarten
17 education program. These methods must include specific
18 recommendations or options for each of the following elements:
19 1. Assessment of age-appropriate progress for each
20 child;
21 2. Evaluation of outcome measures for each provider in
22 each setting; and
23 3. Evaluation of school readiness coalitions.
24 (f) Funding.--Estimated cost per full-time-equivalent
25 child of the recommended curriculum, design, and standards.
26 This cost estimate must consider funding for each of the state
27 board's recommendations or options for each of the program
28 elements described in this subsection.
29 (3) The report must also include the state board's
30 recommendations or options for best practices to improve the
31 outcomes of school readiness coalitions and providers.

1 Section 2. Audits.--
2 (1) Performance Audit.--The Office of Program Policy
3 Analysis and Government Accountability shall conduct a
4 performance audit of the school readiness programs
5 administered by the Florida Partnership for School Readiness,
6 the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and the school readiness
7 coalitions for fiscal years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and
8 2002-2003. The audit shall reassess the implementation,
9 efficiency, and outcomes of the school readiness programs and
10 shall examine the progress achieved by the Florida Partnership
11 for School Readiness and the school readiness coalitions in
12 response to the office's findings and recommendations reported
13 under section 411.01(11), Florida Statutes. The office shall
14 also:
15 (a) Monitor the study conducted by the State Board of
16 Education on the voluntary universal prekindergarten education
17 program;
18 (b) Evaluate the ability of the school readiness
19 system to effectively implement the voluntary universal
20 prekindergarten education program based upon the state board's
21 recommendations or options for curriculum, design, and
22 standards for the program; and
23 (c) Identify modifications or options for the school
24 readiness system necessary to effectively implement the
25 voluntary universal prekindergarten education program.
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27 A report of the audit's findings and recommendations or
28 options shall be submitted to the Governor, the President of
29 the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by
30 January 15, 2004.
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1 (2) Financial and Operational Audit.--The Auditor
2 General shall conduct a financial and operational audit of the
3 school readiness programs administered by the Florida
4 Partnership for School Readiness, the Agency for Workforce
5 Innovation, and the school readiness coalitions for fiscal
6 years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003. The Auditor General
7 shall also examine compliance with state and federal law and
8 with rules adopted by the Florida Partnership for School
9 Readiness and shall review implementation of the school
10 readiness plans for compliance with the approved plans. A
11 report of the audit's findings and recommendations or options
12 shall be submitted to the Governor, the President of the
13 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by
14 January 15, 2004.

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16 While the audits are being conducted pursuant to this section,
17 local school readiness coalitions shall refrain from
18 initiating new long-term fiscal commitments.

19 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
20 law.

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